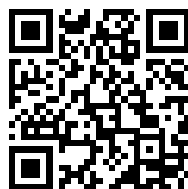

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PETER FRANCIS XAVIER DE RAM,
RE

FIRST RECTOR OF THE

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF LOUVAIN.

[*Reprinted from the Irish Ecclesiastical Record.*]

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1865.

PETER FRANCIS XAVIER DE RAM.

The great question of the present day is the question of education. The Catholic Church, as the infallible teacher of men, claims for herself the right to control human thought, and exercises that right by sitting in judgment on each new-fangled system as it appears. This claim is peremptorily rejected by the civil power, which, on its part, wishes to make of education a department of government. The science of the age sides on the whole with the civil power as against the Church. Towards the ecclesiastical authorities it assumes at times an air of pity, as towards men whose otherwise estimable qualities are warped by a religious bigotry which is eminently unscientific; at times it exhibits irritation and distrust; at times again it is in open and undisguised antagonism. In the face of a jealous government, to urge, and to urge successfully, the inalienable rights of the Church, requires no ordinary tact; in the face of the contempt, or distrust, or antagonism of the intellect of a country, to take every understanding captive unto Christ, demands no ordinary courage and ability. And yet this is what is meant by founding a Catholic University; and this has been achieved in the nineteenth century in Belgium, under God, through the instrumentality of one priest, Monsignor Peter Francis Xavier De Ram, the late Rector of the Catholic University of Louvain. A life such as his is a model which all may study with great profit. It is only with his spirit and through his principles that we may hope to obtain for Ireland what he obtained for Belgium—the full liberty of Catholic education.

De Ram's great work, but not his only work, was the foundation of the Catholic University of Louvain. At the time when he was called by the bishops of Belgium to form and direct the new institution, he was diligently engaged in promoting the spread of good books, in illustrating the antiquities of his country, and especially in publishing the lives of the saints and other distinguished men who have shed glory on his native land. Almost in his infancy he imbibed a special predilection for the study of the lives of the saints from a holy aunt, a religious of the Premonstratensian Order, who lived in his father's house, having been driven from her convent at the time of the first French

Revolution. Even before he had completed his clerical studies, this taste made him publish, as author or editor, several works bearing on the lives of the saints, and before he was twenty-five years of age he undertook a new edition in the Flemish language of the great works on this subject by Alban Butler and Godescard. This taste he preserved through life, and to it when fully developed we are indebted for his other great works, the *Collections of Belgian Synods*, the *Synodicum Belgicum*, the *Synodicum Antverpiense*, and *Ecclesiastical History of Belgium, Belgica Sacra*, of which he published the plan in 1830, for which since then he has been collecting most abundant materials, but which, alas! he has not lived to finish.

Later on, we find him labouring strenuously and successfully to obtain for the Jesuit Fathers a state subsidy to enable them to continue the stupendous undertaking of the old Bollandists, the *Acta Sanctorum*. Thanks in great measure to this help, the noble work is now making progress to the great glory of God, to the advantage of religion, and the honour of Belgium. And among the first eulogists of the departed prelate, we have the great Jesuit Father de Buck, the head of the present Bollandists in Brussels, to whose notice on Mgr. de Ram we are indebted for much that appears in this sketch.

In fine, this same taste for historical research, especially in the history of his native land, made him take a most distinguished place in the Royal Academy of Belgium, of which he was for thirty-one years one of the chief members, and especially in the Royal Commission of History, founded precisely for the promotion of the study of the national annals. Indefatigable in his labours, never-failing in his attendance at the meetings of the Commission, bringing to them the rich treasures of his learning, joined to the affability and conciliatory tone which always characterised him, we are told by one who knew him there, that never during that long period was there between him and his associates in that great work the least shadow of a difference. True to the end to his work for religion and his country, one of his last public acts, two days before his death, was to assist at a meeting of the Academy; and he leaves unfinished three works undertaken in the same holy cause: the Chartulary of the Abbey of Cambron, the preparation of materials for a general and diplomatic history of the University of Louvain, and the collection and arrangement of the short Flemish chronicles scattered in manuscript through the Belgian libraries, with a view to their forming a compendium to the great chronicle of De Dynter.

But it is not with De Ram's historical labours, great as they were, that we are chiefly interested. His great work for us has been the Catholic University of Louvain. That University was

proposed by Pope Pius IX. as the model which our bishops were to have in view in founding the Catholic University of Ireland. Over it De Ram presided for more than thirty years—in fact, since its foundation; the difficulties, seemingly insuperable, with which he had to contend, were almost identical with those that press our Irish institution; the means for overcoming these difficulties in the two countries were very similar, and we may hope that the Catholic University of Belgium is but the harbinger of the success of the Catholic University of Ireland.

The University of Louvain was called into existence to meet a condition of things parallel to that which existed in Ireland in 1850, and to cope with dangers similar to those which, at that period, impended over the Catholics of this empire. In its working it has wedded together interests which the sophistry of the day makes it fashionable to represent as antagonistic. It is eminently national, eminently scientific, eminently Catholic. It cultivates literature with a zeal which does not interfere with its devotion to theology and other sacred studies, and pursues the highest investigations of science in such a way as to prove that nowhere can freedom of scientific research find a more congenial home than in a Catholic university. These sentiments were eloquently expressed by one of the students of the university. M. Van Tomme, standing by the bier of Mgr. De Ram, spoke as follows, in the name of his fellow students who stood around him:

“The great work founded by the Belgian episcopacy has grown under the shadow of our political and religious independence, and, as our rector himself expressed it, ‘The university is not only a Catholic institution, but also a national institution’. Guided by this noble motto, he directed for thirty-one years the Catholic University, strengthening each day in our hearts the love of religion and of liberty, that two-fold foundation on which rests the glory of our past history, and which guarantees the future of our country. The care of our souls, the cultivation of our minds, these were the objects most dear to his heart as a priest; his love for us made him find in us his reward, his joy, his blessing. How can I express his fatherly tenderness, his boundless devotedness to our interests, his delicate management of our national spirit of independence? These were the principles with which he ruled over this laborious and difficult work. You know the blessed fruits produced in the education of our country by these gifts of mind and heart. Educational liberty, rescued bleeding from stranger hands, first took refuge in the bosom of our University, where Mgr. De Ram stretched out his arms to welcome it, and from that day forward watched over it with zealous care. Our University, the heiress of a glorious name, the offspring of liberty and of faith, under Mgr. De Ram’s presidency, has nobly bound up together the past and the present. Those great works urged on with such ardour, the serried phalanx of youths who

have gone forth from this Institution, the eminent men whom this University has given to our country and to the Church, all proclaim, that his devoted labours have not been vain, and point out to us unmistakeably the greatness of the loss sustained on this day by Catholic youth".

But we are anticipating the course of events. We must take up from the commencement the history of this great man's connection with Louvain. We must even go back a little; for, as Father de Buck remarks, it is only thus we can correct some erroneous ideas, which have been freely circulated, and form some notion of the enormous difficulties which surrounded the foundation of the Catholic University of Belgium. Some of these erroneous ideas were thus expressed by Sir Robert Kane, President of the Queen's College, Cork, in his inaugural address at the opening of that establishment, on the 7th November, 1849:—

"After the Revolution, which rendered Belgium an independent kingdom, the question of university education occupied the attention of its government as one of the greatest moment. The heads of the Belgian Church were fully consulted, and they surely deserved to be, from their right to coöperate in every measure of public welfare. The result has been the institution of three great colleges: one at Louvain, formed in the buildings of the old university, and hence popularly called by the name of the 'University of Louvain'; the second college situated at Liege; and the third in Ghent. Students follow their studies in any of these colleges, but they do not there get their degrees. What course did the Belgian authorities take, when, after the Revolution, they had in their own hands the power of giving to all those colleges a code of securities for faith and morals which might have served us here as a model? They demanded to have Louvain absolutely and exclusively under their own control, and consented to leave the colleges of Liege and Ghent in the hands of government absolutely, without any provision for moral discipline or religious instruction. What is the practical result? The College of Louvain contains only the university faculties, conducted on medieval models, and educating after the forms of old established universities. The Colleges of Ghent and Liege contain the practical branches, to which the majority of the young men attach themselves. The schools of mines and engineering are at Liege. The schools of mechanics and of practical chemistry are at Ghent. There are great schools of medicine at both colleges. Hence the practical education is conducted at those colleges where there is no religion and no discipline. In Belgium there are three colleges, one with ultra-ecclesiastical discipline, attended generally by Catholic foreigners, whom the traditional fame of the medieval university brings to Louvain. The other two are colleges without religion, to which the majority of Belgian students are drawn for practical education" (*Inaug. Address*, pp. 23, 24).

In the course of this notice we shall see how many mis-statements or mistakes are contained in these few sentences. In

this place suffice it to say, that in the year 1864 alone, 325 students of the Catholic University of Louvain took secular Degrees, viz., 117 in Law, 125 in Medicine, 42 in Philosophy and Letters, and 41 in science; and since 1836, the large number of 6,881 took Degrees in those Faculties, viz., 2,028 in Law, the same number in Medicine, 1,838 in Philosophy and Letters, and 987 in Science. We have taken these figures from the official publication, *l'Annuaire*, or University Calendar, for 1865, and from it we also learn, that of 768 students, the total number in the university in the Session 1863-64, only 121 were Students of Theology. There were in the Faculty of Law 204, in that of Medicine 230, in that of Philosophy and Letters 102, and in that of Science 111.

The true history of the circumstances, which preceded and accompanied the foundation of the Catholic University of Louvain, may be briefly told, as follows:—

By the treaty of Vienna in 1815, the Catholic and Protestant Netherlands, Belgium and Holland, were united under one king, William I. of the House of Orange. Immediately on his accession this monarch proposed for the acceptance of his whole kingdom a constitution which had been originally intended for Protestant Holland only. This constitution was condemned as anti-Catholic by the ordinaries of all the dioceses of Belgium. It was also rejected by the nobles or other chief men of the state. But it is worthy of remark, that, notwithstanding its condemnation by the bishops, only 126 voters out of 1325 alleged the attacks on the Church as the motive of their rejection of the constitution; and although 766 opposed it, 527 were found to support this most obnoxious portion of it. From this fact we see the great strength of uncatholic opinion in Belgium fifty years ago, since in so large a number of the chief men of the nation, so few were found to follow the teachings of their bishops.

The ten years which followed were spent by the king, William I., in endeavouring to undermine and still more weaken the Catholic and national feeling in Belgium—to mould that country and Holland into one nationality, which would be animated by one spirit, and that spirit Dutch, and consequently Protestant. For this purpose Dutch was made the official language for all administrative purposes and in all the courts of law and other legal transactions. The immediate result of this measure was to throw the education of the greater part of the Belgian youth into the hands of Dutchmen, and Dutchmen were also placed in every post of honour and emolument throughout the kingdom.

At length, on the 14th of June, 1825, two royal decrees were published, by which it was sought to transfer to the hands of the Protestant Government of Holland the education of the whole of

the youth of all classes in Catholic Belgium. The chief provisions of the first of these decrees were as follow:

"Whereas many schools and institutions for the teaching of the Latin and Greek languages, and for the training of youth for the ecclesiastical state, as well as for other professions, have been established without our consent; and whereas Article 226 of the Fundamental Law* has given us the charge of public instruction . . . desiring at the same time to facilitate and favour every arrangement by which young men may be fitted to become well educated ecclesiastics for the Roman Catholic Church, . . . we have decreed and do hereby decree

"Art. 2. No Latin school, college, or athenaeum, shall be established without the express authorisation of the Department of the Interior.

"Art. 3. No one shall teach the Latin and Greek languages *to the children of more than one family at once*, either in primary schools or in private houses, without having first obtained in one of the universities of the kingdom the degree of *candidat* or of *Docteur en Lettres*.

"Art. 4. All colleges, athenaeums, or Latin schools, are placed under the control of the Department of the Interior.

"All colleges, athenaeums, or Latin schools, named in Art. 1, which at the date of this decree have not been approved as such by former decrees, *shall be closed at the end of the month of September, 1825, unless sanctioned before that time*".

By the second royal decree a "Philosophical College" was established in Louvain for aspirants to the priesthood.

"Whereas some of the heads of the clergy have represented to us that the preparatory education given to young men intended for the ecclesiastical state is insufficient, and whereas we are desirous of providing means to form able ecclesiastics for the Roman Catholic Church.

"Art. 1. An establishment for the preparatory education of young Roman Catholics aspiring to the ecclesiastical state, shall be provisionally erected at one of the universities in the northern provinces of the kingdom. This establishment, under the title of 'Philosophical College', shall be installed in a suitable building. . . . The students shall be received therein, with permission to wear the ecclesiastical habit.

"Art. 14. After the space of two years, to be counted from the opening of the 'Philosophical College', no philosophical lectures shall be given in the episcopal seminaries. . . . After the same time no student shall be admitted into the seminaries who shall not have duly completed his course of studies in the 'Philosophical College'. Each student of the same college must spend therein two years at least".

Thus did the Protestant King of the Netherlands think he had secured the undisputed control of the education, eccle-

* The Constitution of 1815 above mentioned.

siastical and lay, of his Belgian subjects; but a very short time sufficed to convince him of his mistake. In vain was the short delay of two years allowed by these decrees of June 14th, refused by a subsequent enactment of the 11th July, which strictly forbade any student to be received from that day forward into any episcopal seminary in Belgium, unless he had completed his preparatory studies in the Philosophical College. In vain, by another decree of the 14th of August following, the youth of Belgium were forbidden to seek abroad the free Catholic education denied to them at home, and unless educated in one of the state institutions, declared incapable of holding any public office in the gift of the government, or exercising any ecclesiastical function within the kingdom. In vain, by a decree of the 20th November, were the superiors of the diocesan seminaries ordered to dismiss forthwith all youths received since the previous 11th of July; and the young men themselves also commanded to withdraw. On the other hand, in vain was all the influence of the government used to induce the bishops to approve, or at least tolerate, the new system. In vain was it sought to convince the Common Father of the Faithful that the Philosophical College was unexceptionable, by sending to His Holiness' own seminary in Rome some youths of exemplary life, who might, by their good conduct, belie the condemnation pronounced against the institution where they had made their early studies. The episcopacy of Belgium continued firm in its opposition, and the Sovereign Pontiff, Pope Leo XII., directed his internuncio at the Hague to explain that it was impossible for the head of the Catholic Church to assent to measures destructive to the liberties of Catholics, or even to abstain from condemning them and protesting against them. The Belgian youths would not go to the Philosophical College; the few who went would not be admitted to Holy Orders by the bishops; and four years passed slowly along in passive opposition to the inroads of the government on Catholic education.

At last, on the 20th June, 1829, the Dutch Government had to acknowledge itself vanquished. A decree was published abrogating so much of the legislation of 1825 as rendered attendance at the Philosophical College obligatory.

But along with this concession, and perhaps as it were to neutralize it, came new attacks in other ways on the liberties of Catholic Belgium. The royal message to the States-General at the beginning of 1830, recommended measures tending to a further *unification* of Belgium with Holland. Event followed event, and before the end of August a revolution broke out, and five of the best men in Belgium were installed at Brussels as a provisional government, under the presidency of the Baron

de Gerlache, now head of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and president also of the recent Catholic congresses at Mechlin.

When the revolution broke out in 1830, the wisest members of the clergy said, as Father de Buck tells us, "*Fieri non debuit, sed factum valet*", and the whole of the priesthood made common cause with the people. But, although the great masses of the country people remained faithful to Catholic principles, and although the nobility was returning to the practices of religion; although the persecution of the clergy by the Dutch Government had aroused the spirit of the nation, and several even of the infidel party began to lay aside their prejudices, and to express sympathy for the faithful priesthood of their common country, still the religious position of Belgium at that moment was most unsatisfactory.

Mgr. Van Bommel, Bishop of Liege, tells us, that "in 1838 there were in Belgium about 100,000 pseudo-liberals, deadly enemies of the Catholic Church, and most powerful". "And it is not hard", continues the learned prelate, "to explain the fact. For more than forty years all who were destined to occupy positions of importance were, in general, brought up without religious principles. Under the late government the religious element had no part in university teaching; a part of this teaching had even been entrusted to men known to profess anti-religious principles. The wicked passions of men, dangerous occasions, bad example, an immoral theatre, and above all, a literature steeped in wickedness or hostile to Catholic principles;—in fine, the repeated declarations of men who, for party purposes, told the rising generation that to it alone should henceforth belong the rights of government—all resulted in raising this young generation to such a pitch of pride, independence, and licentiousness, that the sweet yoke of faith and the practices of religion became insupportable. Thus was there formed, outside of the masses, who remained faithful, a multitude of men of position and of influence, who know the religion of their fathers only from the bad books where it is attacked, from the stage where it is insulted, from the assemblies where its sacred ministers are ridiculed, from the newspapers where it is calumniated".

Such was the religious position of Belgium when the Belgian episcopacy determined to found the Catholic University of Louvain. Public functionaries, barristers, physicians, merchants, manufacturers, nearly all the men of influence in the country, were infected with that false liberalism which, as Mgr. de Ram himself declared in November, 1830, made many who cried out most loudly for liberty, intend to use it only for self-aggrandisement and at the expense of Catholicity.

The prospect was uninviting; but the bishops were not to

be daunted, although in February, 1834, on their publishing their decree establishing the university, there were disturbances in Brussels and in nearly all the episcopal cities. In December, 1833, they had obtained from Pope Gregory XVI. the sanction of their project and an apostolic brief for erecting the new university; and in June, 1834, they published in another meeting the general statutes for its government. On the same occasion the assembled prelates decided that the youthful M. de Ram—he had not yet completed his thirtieth year, and was then a canon of the Metropolitan Church of Mechlin, and professor of canon law and church history in the seminary of that diocese—should occupy a distinguished place in the new institution. He was formally appointed, within the next few months, head of the Catholic University of Belgium, with the title which in past ages appertained to that office, *Rector Magnificus*, and in that capacity assisted at the solemn inauguration of the university in the Cathedral of Mechlin, on the 4th November in the same year, 1834.

No sooner was he appointed to his high office than he set about finding professors for the faculties of theology, of science, and of philosophy and letters, which alone were to be opened the first year in the temporary home of the university in Mechlin. All the priests he selected were Belgians. Of the lay professors one was a Belgian, the rest were Dutch, French, Germans, and Danes. The following year the university was transferred to Louvain, and we have the formal act of agreement entered into in October, 1835, between Monsignor de Ram and the burgomaster of the city of Louvain, and afterwards solemnly approved by the bishops and municipality, by which on the one hand the bishops undertake to establish a full university course, and on the other hand the town council “undertakes to give gratuitously to the university the free use of the buildings *des Halles* (the great university lecture halls and other public buildings), *du Collège du Pape*, *du Collège des Vétérans*, *du Collège du Roi*, *du Collège des Prémontrés*, *du Collège de Saint Esprit*, *et du Théâtre Anatomique*”. Mgr. de Ram had now to organise the faculties of law and of medicine, and here his difficulties increased. Where was he to find professors in whom faith and true Catholic principles were united with that profound and varied learning which would fit them to occupy chairs in the new university? When we consider the deplorable state of Catholic education among the cultivated classes in Belgium at the time we speak of, these difficulties can be better imagined than expressed; and from these difficulties we may form a judgment of the great prudence and consummate wisdom through which Monsignor de Ram raised the institution to that proud eminence which is now enjoyed by her professors among the learned bodies of Europe.

In all her faculties there are among the professors not only men of extraordinary learning, who unite clearness and method with depth and extent of knowledge, but also models of every Christian virtue; so that with good reason does F. de Buck conclude this portion of his notice of the illustrious prelate by exclaiming: "Yes, the professorial staff brought together by Mgr. de Ram, and which can henceforth be easily recruited from amongst the students of the university itself, is the chief glory, the undying crown of his rectorship". But to understand the relations of Mgr. de Ram with the professorial staff of the university, we should read the funeral discourses which he pronounced at the obsequies of those who preceded him in death. They are published in the University Calendars from 1838 to this time, and clearly prove the esteem and affection he bore to all who were united with him in the great work of his life, the care with which he selected them, the zeal with which he promoted the honour and happiness of each, and the sincere joy with which he was filled when well-merited success crowned their literary or scientific labours.

His devotedness to the students of the university was not less than his affectionate esteem for the professors. By every means in his power he sought to promote their spiritual, their intellectual, and even their temporal interests. And this anxiety for the welfare of the youth entrusted to him was not confined to the time they spent in the university; it followed them into after life. "His fatherly solicitude", says M. Prosper Staes, of the Brussels bar, formerly a student of the university, was not limited to the youths who gathered round him each year for the purposes of study. It followed the students in their several careers through life. His old students always found in their rector one to encourage them, to counsel them, to gather them about him, as a father gathers his children, to rejoice in their success—in a word, to make them his joy and his delight".

His feelings towards the students, and theirs to him, as well as the sentiments with which he unceasingly sought to fill their minds, can well be gathered from the touching words pronounced over his lifeless remains by one of the law students of the university, M. Van. Tomme:

"To-day, on this solemn occasion, the remembrance of the twenty-fifth anniversary of our university, fills us with sentiments of deep emotion. Surrounded by the multitude of your students whom you loved so much, happy in being one heart and one soul with them, you then said: 'Ever remember our watch-word: God and our country; this word epitomizes our duties and our principles. Yes; we have taken to ourselves this word as our inheritance. It will be our comfort in this moment of sorrow, as in those days of joy it

excited our enthusiasm. Wherever our students are called by duty, this noble thought will always be their motto, as it is to-day their hope.

"God, the knowledge of whom you have imparted to us so well, to whom your life of merit, hidden to men's eyes, is manifest for your recompense.

"And OUR COUNTRY, which in the persons of these numbers of youths whom you have educated for her, and filled with your spirit, will ever bear upon her the impress of the works you have achieved, and veneration for your memory".

We are told, that in his government of the students, he knew how to follow the *via media* between severity and too great indulgence. He was sometimes blamed for excess in the latter direction; but those who make this accusation seem to forget that he had to do with the direction, not of an ecclesiastical seminary, nor even of a school or college, but of an university, where young men were to be prepared, not for the service of the sanctuary, but for the busy scenes of life, and where opening manhood, freed from the restraints of boyhood, was to be gently led rather than forced, to love the beautiful paths of wisdom on account of their beauty, and to walk steadily in them, because of the goal to which they lead. If he did not hinder everything that is evil, he is not to be blamed; for no legislator can ever aim at this; and we are told by the Incarnate Wisdom Himself, that the cockle must at times be permitted to grow with the wheat, lest in plucking it up, the good grain should be injured. But that his work produced blessed fruits, and that those fruits are likely to remain, is evident to every one who compares the state of religious education among Belgian Catholics when it was founded, with its state at present. He did everything in his power to preserve and strengthen the spirit and practice of religion among the students. He established a regular course of religious instruction, at which all the students of philosophy are obliged to assist, and to which the other students are invited; twice each year he brought the most distinguished preachers to Louvain to deliver religious conferences, which might serve as a preparation for the Paschal communion; he assisted in establishing in the University branches, or conferences of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and to the utmost of his power encouraged the Sodality or Congregation of the Blessed Virgin, which was founded by the Jesuit Fathers in the chapel of their residence, and numbers over two hundred members, all lay students of the Catholic University.

What have been the results? At the beginning of this article we saw the deplorable state of educated Catholics in Belgium in 1830, with respect to Catholic feelings and principles. At that

time the number of Catholic barristers and physicians who practised their religion was extremely small. Now, in Brussels, Liege, and Ghent, the greater part of the young bar, if not of the whole bar practising in the chief courts of law, which are situated in these three cities, are thoroughly devoted to the Catholic Church. Without doubt, several of these young lawyers did not study in Louvain; they owe the preservation of their faith to the good education received in the bosom of their families, in the Jesuit Colleges, and in other Catholic institutions; but a large number has studied in the Catholic University, and all of them must be greatly confirmed in their religious feelings and principles, and must derive new strength and courage to declare them openly, from the public spirit redolent of Catholicity which proceeds from Louvain. We are told that one of the most interesting features of the great Catholic Congress of Malines in 1863, was the presence of eight hundred students of the University of Louvain, youths as distinguished for learning as for the truly Catholic spirit by which they were animated on that most interesting occasion. We are also told, that in all the great cities, and some of the smaller towns of Belgium, literary societies are springing up, which publicly proclaim the Catholic principles on which they are founded; and that the class in Belgium most devoted to the interests of religion, is precisely the educated Catholic youth of the country. What wonder, then, that the immense influence for good exercised by the University of Louvain, under the presidency of its distinguished rector, should be acknowledged in Belgium by enemies as well as friends, and that on more occasions than one the Holy See itself should have exhorted the bishops of other countries, as well as of Ireland, to imitate their brethren of Belgium by founding a Catholic University like that of Louvain!

While labouring to make the youth of the University good Christians, Mgr. De Ram laboured also with indefatigable zeal to make them learned men and good citizens. FAITH, LEARNING, LIBERTY, were the words which he loved to unite in his discourses. Every one knows the results of his inculcating those principles without ceasing on the young Belgians entrusted to him by his Catholic country, which had just recovered its liberty from Protestant Holland; and the numerous and high distinctions won by the students of Louvain, in the public examinations to which the whole youth of Belgium is admissible, attest the excellence of the literary and scientific teaching of the University, while the elevated positions now occupied by many of its ancient alumni prove beyond gainsaying, that its educational fruits remain, and will be an abundant source of intellectual, social, and political blessings to Belgium.

Such is the institution which has just lost its first rector, we may say its founder. Such the work which Mgr. de Ram directed with consummate wisdom for thirty-one years. Such the Catholic University of which Belgium, nay, Christendom, may well be proud. It is a great lesson to us all to see that, even in these days of mere material progress, without faith, without Christian love—when men would fain persuade us that learning, to be a blessing, need not be referred to God or religion—when the apostle's words, "*Scientia inflat, charitas vero aedificat*", are held to be not over true. An University founded and governed by a Catholic episcopacy, by the aid of their Catholic people only, established on purely Catholic principles, without any of those helps which men of the world value most, already in its infancy rivals the great seats of learning of the middle ages. And all this is due in a great measure to one man, who at thirty years of age was called by the Belgian Episcopacy to rule over it, and who, with untiring energy, consummate wisdom, and gentle perseverance, moulded every part into perfect symmetry, so that schismatical Russia came to study the model, and the Holy See could say to Ireland, as well as to any other country wishing for a Catholic University: "*Inspice, et fac secundum exemplar*". With no more fitting words can we conclude this brief notice, than with those spoken by the Vice-Rector of the University at his funeral: "The Catholic University of Louvain was indebted to God and to the bishops of Belgium for her Rector: to her Rector she owes everything else".

Among the tokens of sympathy which it received on the sad occasion of the death of Mgr. de Ram, the University of Louvain mentions the condescension of our Holy Father, in graciously sending by telegraph his apostolic benediction to the bereaved University, as well as the following address of "condolence with her elder sister from the Catholic University of Dublin":—

Illustrissimo et adm. Rdo. Dno. Vice-Rectori; Illmis. D.D. Facultatum Decanis; et Perillustribus D.D. in Universitate Cath. Lovaniensi Professoribus ornatissimis, Universitas in Hibernia Catholica
S.D.

Paucis abhinc diebus pervenit ad nos tristissima notitia mortis Illmi. et Rmi. D.D. Francisci Xaverii de Ram, istius Universitatis in Belgio Catholicae Magnifici Rectoris. Haud certe sine maximo cordium nostrorum dolore nuntium istum accepimus. Siquidem et inclytam Universitatem Vestram præcipuo lumine et ornamento destitutam conspicimus, et Supremo Capite et primo Rectore orbatam, qui res nascentis, imo potius renascentis Academiae summa humanitate, ornatissimus homo, est moderatus; qui miro ordine ita omnia paravit et instituit, ut antiquae illius in vestra civitate Universitatis decus et in scientiis laudem nova aemularetur, imo et superaret.

Ad consolandum igitur vos in casu isto, quo est gravissime afflicta Academia Vestra, Universitatem hanc nostram urget et communis fides, et praecipua dilectio qua nos complecti dignati estis, et nomen ipsum Universitatis Catholicae. Nam et inclytam vestram Academiam haec nostra haud passibus aequis insequi conatur, et vester proinde dolor, aerumnae vestrae nobis vobiscum sunt communes. Itaque et inter hos dies nostrum erit clarissimi viri, vestri quondam Rectoris Magnifici animae piaculari Sacrificio opitulari, publicisque Ecclesiae officiis, et illi requiem et ipsius Operi, Universitati scilicet Vestrae incolumitatem et in dies provectus adprecari.

Ex aedib. Univers. in Hib. Cath.

Datum Dublinii V. Kal. Junias, 1865.

BARTH. WOODLOCK,

Rector Univer. Cath.

THOMAS SCRATTON,
a Secretis Universit.

The following is the reply of the Vice-Rector on the part of the University of Louvain:—

Louvain, de l' Université Catholique, le 9 Juin, 1865.

MAGNIFICE RECTOR,

Perquam gratae nobis fuere literae tuae plenissimae illa humanitate, proximis hisce diebus ad nos datae, in quibus Dublinensis Academiae nomine moerorem nostrum de obitu Viri illustrissimi Petri Francisci Xaverii de Ram, tuae doloris participatione levare voluisti, unaque significasti Dublinensem Academiam jam nunc hoc quoque curare, ut brevi, in suo coetu, oblato peculiari Sacrificio publicis votis precibusque aeterna requies animae illustrissimi Viri a Deo expetatur.

Itaque facere non possum, Magnifice Rector, quin nostrae Academiae nomine tibi gratias quam maximas agam tam ob hoc germanae caritatis indicium quam ob illam doloris officiosam significationem.

Immanem profecto jacturam facimus in amissione Viri qui, ut recte dicis, Magnifice Rector, renascentis Lovaniensis Academiae quodam modo pater fuit, et diuturno tempore gubernator prudentissimus, et praecipuum ejus lumen et decus et ornamentum; quem nos quidem eodem desiderio lugemus quo filii parentem.

Reliquum est, et Dublinensem Academiae, quam tu, Magnifice Rector, sapientissime moderaris et nos praecipuo quodam amore complectimur, prospera quaevis exoptemus; quod magnam certe partem praestiterimus, si, quod enixe facimus, Deum precamur ut te illi Academiae quam diutissime servet.

VICE RECTOR UNIVERSITATIS.

T. A. NAMECHE.*

Viro Eximio ac Reverendissimo Bartholomaeo Woodlock,
Magnifico Rectori Universitatis Catholicae in Hibernia.

* Mgr. de Ram died in Louvain on the evening of Sunday, May 14th. The funeral obsequies were celebrated on Thursday the 18th, and he was interred on Friday the 19th, at Nylen, near Lieure, where he had his country residence. On the 28th of June there was a second solemn funeral service, at which the Cardinal Archbishop of Malines presided, and the Bishop of Ghent, and the whole professorial body of the University attended. On the 7th of July the Catholic University of Ireland assisted at a solemn Requiem in the University Church, Stephen's Green, Dublin. The Archbishop of Dublin presided at the Mass, which was celebrated by the Bishop of Limerick; and a funeral discourse in honour of the deceased prelate was read by the Rector, Very Rev. Mgr. Woodlock, at a meeting of the University, on Sunday, July 9th.



